

New York Post

FOUNDED BY ALEXANDER HAMILTON IN 1801

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The New York Post is published six days weekly. It is owned by the New York Post Corporation: Dorothy Schiff, President; Harry Rosen, Vice President; Marvin Berg, Secretary; L. H. Cook, Treasurer, 16 West St., New York 6, N. Y.

Meanwhile, About the CIA Man

Sen. Eugene McCarthy (D-Minn.) has undertaken a lonely fight against confirmation of John A. McCone as director of the Central Intelligence Agency. McCone represents one of the President's more dubious choices. It is regrettable that so few liberal Senators have been willing to tell him so . . . or at least to ask sharp questions about it.

If it is true that, as chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, he "leaked" reports in favor of building "big bombs" and the resumption of all-out testing, that would suggest bad political judgment; we would have had everything to gain from a freeze in nuclear weapons technology. It also indicated an inability to subordinate his own views to those of the President he was serving—since it was President Eisenhower's policy to get a test ban treaty.

McCone's attempt to fire professors at the California Institute of Technology who refused to sign loyalty oaths not only reflects a disturbing intolerance but a shocking lack of political sophistication. This could be disastrous in an agency which must have a fingertip responsiveness to the political shadings among our opponents which might ripen into significant divisions.

The Senate has an obligation to explore these matters in depth. We hope Sen. McCarthy will not remain a solitary voice, and that the issues will be fully aired on the Senate floor before a final vote occurs. Perfunctory committee hearings and routine approval will raise grave doubts about the Senate's seriousness in a very serious area of business.